

A GERMAN ALLIANCE

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BY ALLAN UPDEGRAFF



"Look here!" retorted Leonard. "Just to show you I believe in this scheme, I'll put up the sixty myself, and you can repay me out of the profits."

The German was impressed. "Maybe I ain't up to these fast times, Mr. Leonard," he admitted doubtfully; "but I am not too old to learn yet. You chust show me that there's money in that scheme, and maybe I haf sixty dollars, and then several."

So Leonard got out a pencil and a piece of paper, and proceeded to show him. At the end of a strenuous half-hour, Mr. Bucher was as enthusiastic, in his careful Teutonic way, as Leonard himself.

"But my English language ain't just so fine as might be," he demurred at last. "You will help me with those ads; but I am shaky a trifle on letters that must be written."

Leonard's brain registered another idea, so

tered the door and went into Mr. Bucher's office. Mr. Bucher's office was in the forward part of the store, while the Leonard Advertising Agency's desk occupied the extreme rear; and the golden play of the bright June sunshine about her trim figure by contrast with the pale glow from the sky-light that lighted his desk seemed to him symbolical of their respective positions. She did not see him at all. But, for some time after she had disappeared, he preserved a mental image of her wide, wavy-brimmed straw hat, the gracious oval and soft color of her face, the admirable starchiness and hang of her white duck dress. Curiously enough, this charming ensemble reacted upon him in such a way as to produce numerous sighs and pages of Blue Devils. The click and whirr of her typewriter, which soon began, merely added volume to the sighs and viciousness to the facial expressions of the Devils.

in a day or so." He arose, got out his canvassing portfolio, and took down his hat from its peg on the wall. "Guess I'll go out and try to drum up a little business of my own," he said.

"Good luck!" returned the German cordially.

Jimmy put his portfolio under his arm and started for the door, with a half-defined intention of stopping in Mr. Bucher's office. But as he approached the office-entrance he began to feel, in a very disconcerting, knee-weakening way, as if he were not himself but somebody else in his shoes; and when a person is troubled by such feelings, he is in no condition for making, or putting into practice, radical determinations. The sharp, business-like sound of Miss Hildreth's typewriter was not encouraging. Walking very slowly, he reached the door of the office and looked in. Miss Hildreth looked up, saw him, flushed scarlet, and then—horrible omen—her lips shut in a straight line, her eyes and fingers returned to the typewriter. The Leonard Advertising Agency fled into the street. It did not even have the satisfaction of knowing that its sudden appearance had resulted in such a series of "pied" lines that Mr. Bucher's stenographer had been obliged to re-write the page on which she was working.

Leonard got into the subway and went down-town to see the inventor of a new hook-and-eye; but the inventor had sold his rights, and didn't want to advertise. The advertising solicitor of the Leonard Agency was unreasonably discouraged by this failure. He gave up active soliciting, and spent the rest of the morning idly walking the streets, making and un-making plans which centered about Mr. Bucher's office-force. Possibly, if that hook-and-eye inventor had invested in advertising, Jimmy would have been emboldened to face his problem squarely: which meant facing Miss Clara Hildreth. But even this slight rebuff, added to Miss Hildreth's failure to notice him, had the effect of rendering him utterly miserable. After a luncheon which the ptoamines of disappointment rendered indigestible, he returned to his desk. Miss Hildreth was out. The Leonard Advertising Agency spent most of the afternoon in wondering whether life was worth living.

The occurrences of that day formed the foundations of a habit. As he had not summoned the courage to speak to Miss Hildreth then, Jimmy was inclined to let matters drift. Sometimes he glanced into Mr. Bucher's office as he passed in or out; but Miss Hildreth betrayed no further sign of being cognizant of his presence. Mr. Bucher himself made matters worse by a continual jocular cheerfulness. The answers to his advertisements, while not overwhelmingly numerous, were highly satisfactory.

"I say, Mr. Leonard," he remarked abruptly one afternoon; "I don't like to butt in; but you ain't, vat you call, very spunky, it seems to me."

Jimmy pretended not to understand. "How's that, Mr. Bucher?"

"Humph!" returned the German, puffing his pipe.

This remark seemed to require no comment, so Jimmy made none.

"These young peoples I don't understand," continued the German philosophically, after a short silence. "In some things they seems wader to expect the wurst. They makes Rocky Mountains out of garden mole-hills; and there they vill sit, vundering and vundering how they vill ever get over. Ain't it?"

scarcely but give her some suggestions, now and then."

"Glad to hear it," said Jimmy. His tone made it plain that he wouldn't be glad to hear any more of it.

Mr. Bucher rose abruptly. "If you'll excuse me," he said, "you are something of a *dummkopf* with respect to several important matters, Mr. Leonard."

He returned to his office without waiting for a reply, puffing his pipe furiously.

Jimmy decided that the time was ripe for him to move into an office. He spent the afternoon looking for a place, finally selected one, and determined to notify Mr. Bucher, the following morning, of his contemplated change. But Mr. Bucher anticipated him by coming to his desk, shortly after his arrival, with an open letter.

"Look vat I gets in my mail this morning!" said the German excitedly. "Chust look at it!"

The letter, written in a heavy scrawl on a piece of wrapping paper, was a violent denunciation of Mr. Bucher's upholstery-by-mail scheme. The writer declared he had been swindled out of \$5 sent for lessons, and threatened to come down, that same morning, and knock Mr. Bucher's "block" off in partial satisfaction. He also suggested that he might "rough-house" the office, and put the whole business "on the bum." He signed himself "John Hobo."

"The man is drunk!" declared the German, when Jimmy had finished reading the letter. "I vill inform the police!"

"It looks like the work of a raving idiot or a practical joker," said Leonard. "Did he really send you \$5?"

"Yes," admitted Mr. Bucher. "And then he writes me to send him all the tools and stuff to work with; and I writes back telling how each student must furnish tools, as says my advertisement plainly always. And then I gets this!"

"I wouldn't worry over it," said Jimmy. Mr. Bucher seemed unreasonably excited; in fact so much excited that, considering his usual Teutonic phlegmatism, his excitement did not seem altogether natural. Jimmy looked at him in astonishment.

"Subbse he comes here and fights wit me!" continued Mr. Bucher, waving his arms, and losing control of his English consonants. "Subbse he does dad? Dad is fine, eh? Ach, to the police station at once I vill go! Subbse he is a lunadick, and shoots mine gizzard out? Fine, ja! Gull! I geds me to dad police station P. D. Q.!"

Jimmy stared at him without replying. The German turned back, as he was about to go, and added:

"You vill stay here till I get back, yes? I would hate that Miss Hildreth be leit alone, you understand?"

"Why, sure," said Jimmy, conscious of a certain thrill at being left as the protector of Mr. Bucher's stenographer. "But, I swear, I don't see why you need be so excited over that fool letter. The fellow's probably only bluffing."

"I takes no chances," replied Mr. Bucher. "You vill see!"

"I will see!" repeated Jimmy, as Mr. Bucher took his hat and left the store. It struck him that the German was almost making himself responsible for John Hobo's appearance. Which was decidedly queer. Almost as queer as Mr. Bucher's unnatural excitement. In fact, the whole affair was queer. All except the fact that James Leonard was left as the contingent protector of Miss Clara Hildreth against the insults of a ruffian. That part was delightful. And Mr. Bucher had emphasized that part. Which, again, was rather queer; and suggestive.

Jimmy noticed that the German, in his excitement, had left John Hobo's note behind. He picked up the scrawl and perused it carefully. There was a German "s" in one of the words. Jimmy pondered this, and gradually over his perplexed face came the expression of a person on the verge of making an interesting discovery. Whistling gently to himself, he hunted an advertising contract, signed by Mr. Bucher, out of one of the drawers of his desk. By carefully comparing the handwriting of this signature with that of John Hobo's letter, he came to an interesting conclusion. With excitement almost equal to Mr. Bucher's own, he thrust the papers into his desk, pulled his chair farther back into the shadows of his corner, and awaited the arrival of John Hobo. He was convinced that Mr. Bucher was perfectly right; he would see.

John Hobo arrived without much delay. He was, as far as Jimmy could judge, an excellent specimen of Bowery tough. Slumping the outer door behind him, he strode heavily into Mr. Bucher's office. He talked, as was to be expected, with unusual loudness and force.

"Is this the office of that Bucher teller, the guy wot teaches how to do upholstery by mail?" he asked.

By straining his ears, Jimmy managed to catch Miss Hildreth's affirmative. It sounded very cool and self-possessed.

"Well, I wanter say right here," roared Mr. Hobo, in excellent character, "that I don't stand for no flim-flam game from him, nor you, nor anybody else!"

Jimmy saw no reason to postpone the

dénouement. He arose and strolled toward the office entrance.

"I'll have to ask you to wait and explain your difficulty to the proprietor, Mr. Bucher," came Miss Hildreth's voice, calm, but with an undertone of excitement that quickened Jimmy's steps.

"Wait, eh?" growled Mr. Hobo, in a voice that would have secured him a place with any Bowery melodrama. "Wait, is it? You just shell out those five beans I loosened up on, and do it about as sudden as you can, too!"

Jimmy stepped into the office.

"How do you do, Mr. Hobo?" he said. The man started, and struck an attitude.

"Foiled, eh?" remarked Jimmy, smiling at him. "That's what you ought to say under the circumstances, you know. Now, then, after me: 'Foiled! Ha! Come on; don't be bashful. You were carrying it off mighty well.'"

"I didn't mean nothing, Mister," returned the villain, sinking, in the approved manner, toward the door. "Excuse me."

"Oh, don't be in a hurry," begged Jimmy politely. "You haven't earned your money yet. By the way, how much is Mr. Bucher going to give you for your little exhibition? I'd like to know, you see, because I feel that I ought to repay him. Is he waiting for you at the corner, eh?"

Mr. Hobo's face took on a look of genuine surprise and chagrin. He backed rapidly out of the door and disappeared.

Jimmy, with a good deal of an effort, broke the silence that followed the villain's exit.

"I suppose you're wondering, Cl—Miss Hildreth," he began, "what all this is about?"



Walking very slowly, he reached the door of the office and looked in.

"I presume I can find out from Mr. Bucher," replied the girl. He glanced at her, but her eyes were directed resolutely toward the window.

"Oh, I say," he protested. "Please give me a chance, anyway. Won't you let me explain this matter, at least? That isn't very much, is it?"

The proverbial camel, trying to get its proverbial nose into its master's tent, was not half so humble and forlorn.

"Well—" admitted Miss Hildreth slowly. "You see, it was this way," resumed Jimmy, eagerly taking up the thread of his discourse, "I happened to find out that Mr. Bucher had hired that man to come here and make a disturbance—he expected me to come to your—that is, to play the melodramatic hero, you know. He didn't altogether like—well, you see, he thought; that is, he happened to find out that you and I had been friends, and that you weren't very friendly with me any longer; and I presume he thought he could get us to—speak to each other, anyway, by his little trick."

Miss Hildreth fixed her eyes on the door, and made no comment.

"I didn't find out what he intended to do until after he went out this morning," continued Jimmy miserably, "or of course I'd have stopped him." He pondered the significance of this last remark, and hastily reversed himself. "That is to say, I wouldn't have stopped him at all, if I'd thought the idea would do any good."

Miss Hildreth made no comments.

"I've been rather short with him, when he tried to—talk about our affairs lately," he resumed. "and if he didn't have a heart as big as a waterbucket, he wouldn't have tried to work this last scheme for my benefit. And even if it doesn't do any good, it's given me this chance to say how I regret having lost your friendship. Oh, say!" he burst out suddenly. "Isn't there anything I can do to make you forgive me? I'm sorry, dead sorry, honestly, you don't know how sorry I am. If there were only some dragon or something or other I could lick to prove it—"

Miss Hildreth glanced up at him at that.

"I guess—if you're really very sorry—that's enough," she said.



HE Leonard Advertising Agency, James Leonard, Manager, sat at his desk in the rear of "Bucher's Havana Tobacco Emporium," spilling good stationery with despondent hieroglyphics. The Agency's whole attitude, indeed, expressed despondency: the droop of its head, the angle of its elbows, the sprawling abandon of its long legs. And yet business was good, "considering"; so good, in fact, that the manager had practically determined to give up his ten square feet of "desk room" in the stuffy tobacco store and move into a real office. To put the matter plainly, the Leonard Advertising Agency's difficulties centered in an affair of the heart.

A certain name, many times repeated, might have been deciphered from the managerial hieroglyphics. "Miss Clara Hildreth" was the name: "Miss Clara Hildreth—MISS CLARA HILDRETH," the last and largest repetition running, in a huge scrawl, across the skulls, scrolls, Spencerian birds and Maltese crosses with which Mr. Leonard symbolically expressed his dejection. He had written her a letter, explaining, apologizing. She had not answered. Why pry into the painful causes of an agonizing situation? The present status, the thing-in-itself, is enough. The manager drew a disappiated house and ornamented its façade with a creature resembling a winged chimpanzee: or more nearly, perhaps, a Blue Devil.

Mr. Bucher, corpulent, fifty, German to his finger-tips, perambulated aimlessly in Leonard's direction, putting a sudden stop to the hieroglyphics.

"You vas—you are busy, Mr. Leonard?" he inquired.

"Nope," returned Jimmy, crumpling up the Blue Devil, and summoning a grin. The German drew up a chair and sighfully sat down. "The Trust wants this corner. So they puts in a little shop down the street, and gives coupons and cuts prices, and takes away my trade. Then they offers me what ain't half my stock is worth, see? But I makes no money any more, not even enough to pay rent. I guess I vill—I will sell them."

"What'll you do then?" asked Leonard. "Upholsterer by trade," explained the other succinctly, and added: "I used to teach the scholars how to do it in Morrison Manual Training School once."

Leonard was surprised. "You used to teach it?"

"Yes. But they asked me to—quit, you understand. My English language, you see, vas—was not very good."

This information seemed to strike the Leonard Advertising Agency as very interesting. The manager leaned back in his chair and surveyed the old German as if he had suddenly become an entirely different person.

"It was a good job—that teaching," said Bucher, shaking his head. "A very good job."

"How would you like," inquired Leonard suddenly, "to teach upholstery by mail?"

The German drew himself up as if he had been insulted.

"By mail!" he repeated. "Vat you mean, anyhow, by that, eh? Teach upholstery—by mail!"

"Sure as you're alive!" declared Jimmy.

"Why, man, there's a fellow in Chicago who clears about ten thousand a year by teaching taxidermy by mail. They sell coal by mail nowadays—and college educations, too! There's money in this upholstery scheme; more, I'll bet you, than in the taxidermy one. All you'll have to do is to get your lessons printed out on slips—just like you used to teach 'em to your classes, you know. Then you answer inquiries, and make any extra explanations by special letter. Easy as falling off a log! How does it strike you?"

With characteristic German reticence, Mr. Bucher did not say, immediately, how it struck him. But after he had produced and lit a particularly black and evil-smelling pipe, he remarked:

"Everything is lovely, but the main thing; that's all. How do I get any customers?"

"Advertise!" cried the Leonard Agency, getting to its feet and walking the floor in its excitement. "Advertise! You'll be surprised stiff at the number of customers half a dozen ten-dollar ads, placed in the proper magazines, will bring you!"

"Sixty dollars," commented Mr. Bucher doubtfully. "Sixty dollars. Humph!"



"Advertise!" cried the Leonard Agency, getting to its feet.

startlingly brilliant that it paled his previous ones into insignificance.

"You will have to get a good stenographer," he said. "I know of one—just the one you want."

"Not too expensive, you know," cautioned the German.

"Oh, no; of course not," agreed Jimmy.

"Vere is he now working?"

"She," said Leonard deliberately, "is now employed by the Hallowell Advertising Agency—where I got my start, you know. Her name is—Miss Clara Hildreth."

"Friend of yours, perhaps?" suggested Mr. Bucher.

After some slight hesitation, Jimmy decided that this question could be answered in the affirmative. At any rate, he was her friend; and, unless she had changed distressingly—He looked up to find Mr. Bucher's shrewd eyes twinkling at him.

"You think perhaps we had better send for her—right away?" suggested the German, smiling. "The business—it requires her at once, eh?"

Leonard laughed.

"Well, yes," he admitted.

"Good!" said Mr. Bucher. "I agree. I will write her this afternoon, saving you haf recommended her so highly—"

"No—no," interrupted Jimmy. "You might just say, a friend recommended her."

Mr. Bucher looked puzzled.

"You see, the fact is," explained the manager, persuaded to confidence by the other's friendliness, "I'm as friendly toward her as ever, but she, you understand; she, you know—"

"Ja, I reckon I know!" said Mr. Bucher.

"A misunderstanding, ain't it? Too bad, too bad! But it might be fixed up, yes?"

"Well—I hope so!" admitted Jimmy.

"But that isn't business! I'm going to turn out those 'ads,' right now, and place them this afternoon. The three I'm going to put in weeklies will be out in a week or ten days. So you'd better get busy on your lesson sheets. We'll have inquiries and checks piling in here from all over the country!"

In many cases it is painfully true that the more brilliant the idea, the more quickly it becomes tarnished. This truth was brought home to the manager of the Leonard Advertising Agency when, in the interims of writing and soliciting "ads," he revolved in his mind the probable consequences of having Miss Hildreth established near him. At first the mere prospect of her proximity had seemed so delightful that it gave life a new and more cheerful color; but, he soon reflected, if she refused to answer his letters, the chances were that she would not be much moved by the sight of his person. It would be "sorrow's very crown of sorrow" to feel, daily, that she was so near and yet so frigidly far away.

When Mr. Bucher, with an insinuating smile, informed him that Miss Hildreth had accepted and was to begin work the following Monday, he was rendered at once happy and miserable. His agitation subsequently ran to new neckties, socks, and suit-pressings.

Leonard was at his desk, that momentous Monday morning, when Miss Hildreth en-

tered the door and went into Mr. Bucher's office. Mr. Bucher's office was in the forward part of the store, while the Leonard Advertising Agency's desk occupied the extreme rear; and the golden play of the bright June sunshine about her trim figure by contrast with the pale glow from the sky-light that lighted his desk seemed to him symbolical of their respective positions. She did not see him at all. But, for some time after she had disappeared, he preserved a mental image of her wide, wavy-brimmed straw hat, the gracious oval and soft color of her face, the admirable starchiness and hang of her white duck dress. Curiously enough, this charming ensemble reacted upon him in such a way as to produce numerous sighs and pages of Blue Devils. The click and whirr of her typewriter, which soon began, merely added volume to the sighs and viciousness to the facial expressions of the Devils.

Mr. Bucher presently came out of his office and perambulated in Leonard's direction. The angle of the German's pipe, as much as the expression of his comfortable countenance, expressed satisfaction with all the world.

"You vas—you are busy, Mr. Leonard?" he inquired punctiliously.

"No," replied Jimmy. The German sat down.

"She vas—a corker, a fine stenographer!" he remarked. "Intelligent, ja! Und, also,—shon! Ah, if I was you, I would surely, surely—" He shook his head and beamed on Jimmy for completion of the sentence.

"I'm glad you like her," said Jimmy, with unnecessary dryness. Mr. Bucher seemed to view the matter somewhat in the light of a joke. Now, really, it was very far from a joke.

"Vere there's a vill there's a yay," remarked the German, apropos of nothing at all; and added: "Vat you think I hear from that Trust this morning?"

"Don't know," returned Jimmy disconsolately. "What?"

"They offer me much as my stock is worth, and more for my lease than vat I pay," said the German. "That lease, it has seven years to run yet, and they need this corner. I guess they vas losing money in their shop."

"Going to sell?" asked Leonard.

Jimmy felt that his philosophical friend was going a little too far.

"How's your business coming on, Mr. Bucher?" he asked.

"Purty good, purty good," replied the other. "I haf raised Miss Hildreth's salary," he added. "Pretty soon, maybe, I vill ask her to take partnership with me. She learns very fast. I haf to do nothing

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"Not just yet," returned Mr. Bucher. "Vait a time longer. If that upholstery-by-mail idea goes good, vait a long time. The place is worth a lot to them. As soon as they find out they can't starve me out, they vill pay! I haf them, ja?"

"I think the upholstery-by-mail business will go all right," returned Jimmy. "You ought to begin to hear from those first 'ads.'"

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